

John H. Murphy

Baltimore, Md.

MR. MURPHY, editor and publisher of the *Afro-American*, was born in Baltimore of free parents, December 25, 1841.

He was sent to school at an early age and during the first year he mastered the old-fashioned spelling book known as John Comly's Spelling Book.



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He remained in this school for three years, each year becoming more and more familiar with Mr. Comly's Spelling Book. He says: "The fact of the matter was that the teacher knew nothing else to teach. At that time this was thought to be sufficient education for a Negro boy. He would be able to read the names on the signs and tell the numbers on the doors, and he could get a good job as porter in a store because of his 'education.'"

When the Civil War opened, he left the farm where he had spent several years and enlisted in the Thirtieth Regiment, United States Colored Troops, and was made sergeant. He early became interested in church and Sunday-school work. In 1875 he was superintendent of St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Sunday-school in Baltimore and traveled extensively over the state, holding Sunday-school institutes and conventions.

He became interested in printing. His first newspaper venture was called *The Sunday-School Helper*. Later he established a paper which he called *The Afro-American*, which is now one of the best-known publications of its kind in the country, and is said to be the only colored paper in the country that has on its staff an Associated Press correspondent.

The Afro-American Company does a book and commercial printing business of about \$7,000 a year. It is one of the largest and best plants owned by an individual colored printer. When asked how much he is worth, he generally replies that he has invested most of his money in "brains."

He has served his church several times. He is on the Committee of Revision of Discipline, a committee on which a layman is rarely placed. He has been active in many things that have had to do with the affairs of his people in city and state.

William H. Davis

Washington, D. C.

MR. DAVIS is principal of the Mott Night Business High School of Washington, and official stenographer of the Negro National Business League. He was born in Louisville, Ky., February 18, 1872, his parents being former slaves. Was educated in the public schools of Louisville, graduating from the Colored High School in 1888 as salutatorian.



William H. Davis

He applied for a position as janitor of a business college with the understanding that the applicant would receive free tuition in exchange for services rendered. The manager said that prejudice on the part of the white students would forbid the instruction of colored students under any circumstances. The young man was denied a chance of getting a business education at that school. The manager

said to the young man that it would be impossible for him to get a position even if he learned shorthand, typewriting, and bookkeeping. He advised him, as well as every young colored man, to learn "something that is practical, something you can utilize." Surmounting the difficulties, Mr. Davis acquired knowledge and skill as a stenographer, typewriter, and bookkeeper, as he puts it, "practically teaching myself in the university of experience."

He was for more than twenty years continuously employed as stenographer by some of the most prominent lawyers of the Kentucky bar, and bankers of Louisville. He was for two years private secretary of Mayor Todd of Louisville. He was the first Negro court stenographer to do court work in the state of Kentucky. He established a commercial department in connection with the Louisville colored school system. Howard University Medical Department gave him the degree of Doctor of Pharmacy in 1902.

The printed verbatim reports of the National Negro Business League reflect his ability as a "shorthand reporter."

There is a volume of truth in the motto which Mr. Davis keeps before his students: "Fit yourself well for a position in life and a position will open unto you."